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SUBJECT: LRA Talks Remain in Limbo Due to Ceasefire

Ref: Khartoum 1894

11. (SBU) Summary: Although the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) walked out of talks on August 9, demanding a ceasefire, consultations between mediators and the parties have continued and talks are resuming. Observers commented that the walkout was not a serious threat, only an attempt to gain leverage. GoSS President Salva Kiir met with the LRA team on August 11 and secured an agreement to re-engage the Ugandans over ceasefire arrangements. The Ugandan delegation wants any ceasefire arrangement to include cantonments where LRA fighters would gather and be counted. The UN has agreed to provide a legal expert to facilitate discussions on a ceasefire. Norway is also considering establishing a technical peace secretariat. The fundamental issue, that the negotiators do not

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truly represent Kony's point of view, has not been resolved. End Summary.

Talks Continue in Fits and Starts

12. (SBU) Both the UN OCHA observers and the mediators from Sant'Egidio believe that talks will continue because LRA leader Joseph Kony realizes these talks are his last chance. However, they warn that LRA threats to walk out will likely remain a regular fixture of the talks. The current disagreement stems from the timing of a ceasefire. The LRA has announced a unilateral ceasefire and asked the government of Uganda to reciprocate. Uganda has refused, fearing the LRA would use a ceasefire to regroup as it has done before. The Ugandans have said they will only accept a ceasefire as part of a final agreement. The Ugandan negotiating team has pointed out that the September 12 deadline indicates a de facto ceasefire, but the Ugandan army reserves the right to deal with the LRA units that have continued to loot villages and steal food in northern Uganda.

13. (SBU) To break the deadlock, GoSS President Salva Kiir summoned the LRA on August 11. The LRA delegation then agreed to return to full talks on August 14 if ceasefire arrangements were the only agenda item. Over the weekend, mediators continued talks with each side, and the Ugandan team indicated that it would consider a ceasefire separately from a final agreement if there were safe-haven rally points for all LRA fighters to gather at and be counted. Observers feel it is unlikely that the LRA will agree to this requirement. The UN is now providing Riek Machar, GoSS Vice President and head mediator, with a legal expert to advise on the wording of a ceasefire and provide other technical assistance.

Uganda Announces Killing of LRA Leader Raska Lukwiya

14. (SBU) The Uganda team announced over the weekend the UPDF had killed one of the five International Criminal Court indictees, Raska

Lukwiya, who has been looting villages in Northern Uganda. Unlike the October announcement that another indictee, Dominic Ongwen, was believed dead, which later turned out to be false, the Ugandans claim Lukwiya is confirmed dead and has been identified by defected LRA members. This reinforces the LRA's demand for an immediate ceasefire, but may not affect long-term prospects for the talks. A high-ranking UNMIS official said he believes that the continued military operations in Uganda, the ICC indictments, and the threat of a Security Council resolution all maintain pressure on Kony to remain committed.

To be Effective, Talks Need to Involve True LRA Leaders

15. (SBU) Most observers, and even the mediation team, agree that the talks will not make much progress until they are led by true military leaders from the LRA, and not just the Acholi diaspora calling themselves the Lord's Resistance Movement (LRM). However, the groups see value in continuing the talks until there is enough momentum to draw the LRA leaders out of the bush and into the discussions. Along these lines, the Norwegian Consulate General has asked Oslo to establish a technical secretariat for the negotiations. A response from the Ministry of International Cooperation is expected this week.

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